

# Intercultural Communicative Activities

for beginners

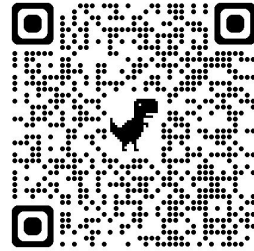
**2026 PLC Conference**

Rachel Skinner

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Saturday April 11, 2026

1:45 - 3:00pm



LET'S  
GO!





# Literacy Hour



Portland Community College  
Sylvania Campus in SW Portland

**Sign up for Literacy Tutor Volunteers**

Help ESOL students learn basic literacy skills

**Wednesdays**

**5:15–6:15 pm**

***April 15 – June 3***

**Organizer: Shannon Woodworth**

Sign up by emailing  
[shannon.woodworth@pcc.edu](mailto:shannon.woodworth@pcc.edu)



## Literacy Hour in SW Portland

## We need Literacy Tutor Volunteers

# About Me





Portland  
State  
UNIVERSITY

★  
Oi, tudo bem?  
Raguel ♡  
Rachel ♡





## Culture Lessons for Beginners

1. They often present a tourist-level view of culture.
  2. Miss deeper values, behaviors, and unwritten rules.
  3. May reinforce stereotypes.
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# Building Cultural Awareness

## Level 1

Facts  
Stereotypes  
Deficiencies

## Level 2

Shallow  
Comprehension

## Level 3

In-depth  
Comprehension

## Level 4

Empathy



# What would you do?

You are teaching English to a beginner.

1. Would you set goals in terms of teaching culture?
2. Would you use tutor time to help students develop their cultural awareness?
3. Would you strictly focus on U.S. culture?

# Students develop important skills:

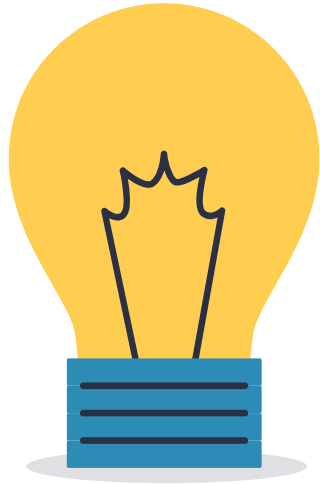
- ❑ Reading
- ❑ Writing
- ❑ Speaking
- ❑ Listening
- ❑ Intercultural Competence



# Go beyond food, flags, and festivals

## **Goal of this presentation**

To provide ESOL tutors and teachers with practical, engaging, and level-appropriate strategies for introducing local cultural norms, values, and day-to-day realities to beginner English learners—without relying on clichés, stereotypes, or superficial culture.



# Why invite culture in to tutoring sessions?

By teaching the target culture you validate the learner's culture and can help them adjust to their new environment.



# Sharing = Learning

Me

SHARING IS CARING



Them

Us



# True or False

Beginners can learn meaningful culture—even with limited language.



# How?

How can we teach culture to  
beginners?



# 1. Identify Culture Themes

A

## VALUES

Time  
Family

B

## NORMS

Habits  
Routines

C

## LANGUAGE

Appropriate topics  
Politeness

D

## BELIEFS

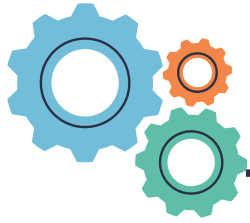
Success  
Healthy Living

## 2. Rely on Teaching Methods



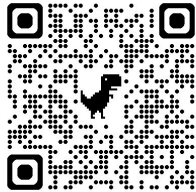
### Student-Centered Task based

- ❑ Scaffolding Materials
- ❑ Intercultural Communicative Activities
- ❑ Compare & Contrast
- ❑ Guests
- ❑ Exit Tickets
- ❑ Field Trips

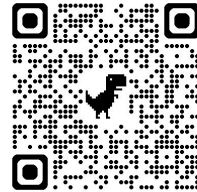


## 3. Finding Materials

### Teaching Local Culture in Oregon OER Materials



[ESOL News Oregon](#)



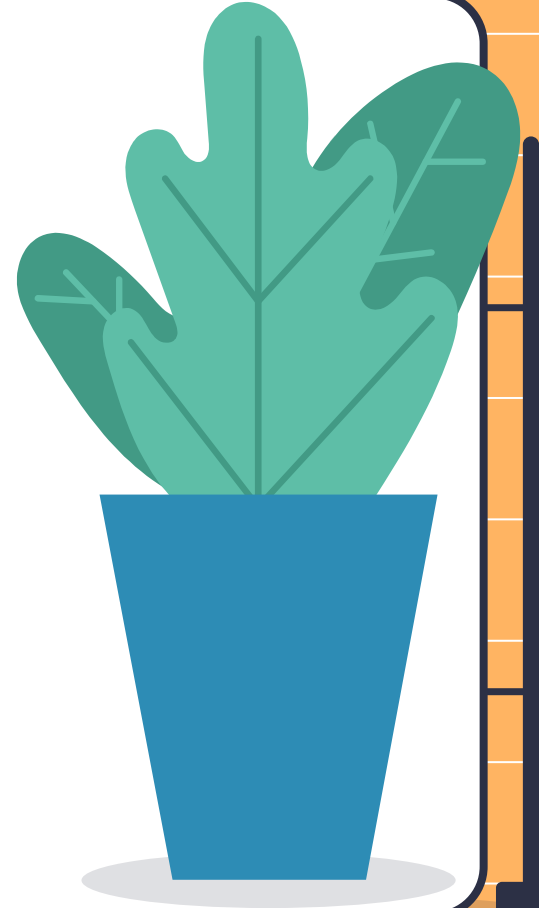
[Evergreen](#)

Reading the news from another culture fosters cultural awareness and empathy. It exposes you to diverse perspectives, societal challenges, and human experiences enhancing your understanding of that culture.



# Examples

1. Intercultural Communicative Activities
2. Compare & Contrast Activities
3. Exit Tickets





## Weather...

...shaping everything from food choices to clothing styles, festivals, and outdoor activities. It's a great topic for small talk!

### Speaking Activity

Ask 3 classmates the questions. Write their information in the table below

1. What's your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. How's the weather in \_\_\_\_\_?

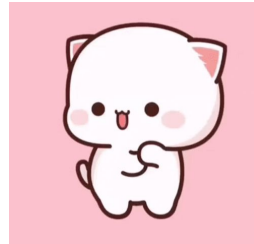
Name	Country	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer

**Question:** Is the weather in Portland the same in your country?

# Compare and Contrast



**Same**



**Different**

## 5. Culture Exchange

### Greetings: U.S. and Thailand

In the United States, people say “*Hello*” or “*Hi*.” They often shake hands. Friends sometimes hug. People usually say the person’s name: “Hi, Maria!”

In Thailand, people say “*Sawasdee*”. They do not shake hands. People put their hands together (like praying). They make a small bow with the head. This is called a wai.

**Same:** People are friendly. People say hello when they meet.

**Different:** U.S.: handshake, hug, say names. Thailand: wai (hands together, bow), say “*Sawasdee*.”

### Wrap-Up Questions:

1. How is greeting someone in the U.S. the same as greeting someone in your country?
2. How is greeting someone in the U.S. different from greeting someone in your country?

## Compare and Contrast #2

1. How is Portland the same as your hometown?
2. How is Portland different from your hometown?



**“Portland and Vung Jau are different. My hometown and Rio de Janeiro are same.”**  
- Level 2 ESOL student



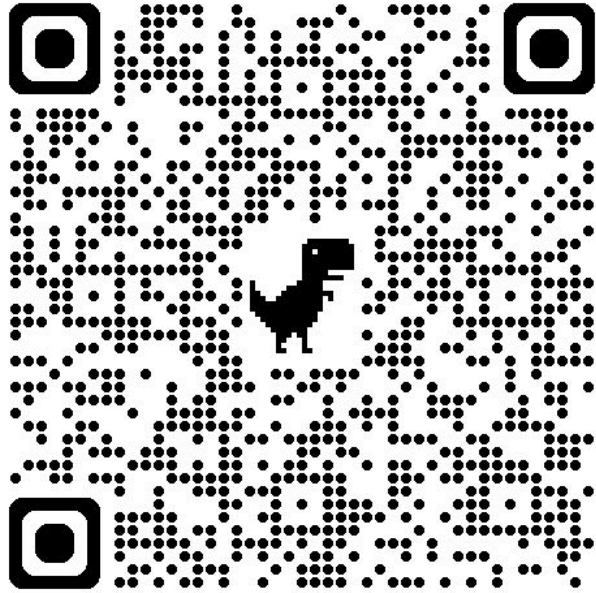
# Exit Ticket



[Click here](#) for example lessons

## Let's Reflect!

1. Are you teaching culture in your tutor sessions but didn't know it?
2. What do you know now that you didn't know before participating in this presentation?
3. What is one thing you want to take with you and start applying now that you know what you know?



# Materials


Created by Rachel Skinner  
Assisted by ChatGPT



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1. Family
  2. Greetings
  3. Daily Routine
  4. Politeness

**Homework challenge:**

**Choose a topic and brainstorm a culture lesson for a student you know.**





# References

Arasaratnam, L. (2016, February 03). Intercultural Competence. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication. Retrieved 25 Oct. 2025, from <https://oxfordre.com/communication/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-68>.

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Scarcella, R. C., & Oxford, R. L. (1992). *The Tapestry of language learning : the individual in the communicative classroom*. Heinle & Heinle.